



Moving Day by the dark inside me

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Angst, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

Pairings: Eleven/Jane H./Mike W.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2019-07-22 03:23:39

Updated: 2019-07-22 03:23:39

Packaged: 2019-12-12 19:08:49

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,164

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: 'Blank' makes you crazy. It's moving day and El is still coming to terms with Mike and that all-important word... the one starting with L. My first meandering foray into the uncertain world of post-S3 writing.

Moving Day

My first meandering foray into the uncertain world of post-S3 writing, please be gentle. It's short, but could turn into a multi-chapter thing, we'll see what happens. Time is fairly limited for me at the moment.

Note - I don't own Stranger Things.

October, 1985

Moving Day

Give me a word

Give me a sign

Show me where to look

Tell me, what will I find?

- ***Shine***, Collective Soul

El lies awake in her bed, staring at the ceiling in the pre-dawn gloom.

She isn't sure what even jolted her awake in the first place. Probably just the creaking of the old house in the fall wind. These days, she doesn't really dream anymore. Not of the Upside Down, not of the Lab, not of friends, nor the father she lost. Not even of Mike. Sleep is nothing but a *void*. But it isn't even that kind of *Void*. Her ability to withdraw into that private place has been cruelly ripped away from her like so much else.

And she doesn't bleed anymore either.

Maybe that's a godsend.

Being awake is the only way she can cope with the *emptiness* inside.

The last three months have been absolute chaos. Hospitals, doctors, *funerals*. Everyone remembers the hurt, and they're *all* hurting, she knows. Watching Max spend endless hours staring out her bedroom window in shock. Hearing Joyce sobbing in the middle of the night through thin walls. The heartbreak of going back to the cabin to

collect her belongings and seeing sunlight streaming through the giant gaping hole in the roof, picking her way amongst the mess and the wreckage, reliving the anguish of almost being *taken* by the Mind Flayer in front of her loved ones. Wandering into Hopper's room and collapsing on his still unmade bed, breaking down in sheer grief, knowing he'll never again appear in the doorway with the familiar half-smirk that melts her heart, holding takeout and asking if she wants to play Boggle. Knowing he is *gone*.

And now things have finally come to a head. Today is El's last day in Hawkins. Most of her things, most of her *life* is already packed away in a series of drab brown boxes, scattered about the threadbare room that had once been Jonathan's. He'd graciously started sharing with Will in the aftermath of Starcourt, when Joyce had taken El in, once the dust had settled and the unspoken question still remained unanswered.

She's also a little scared. Scared to be leaving the sleepy little town she's called *home* for the past two years. The first real home she's ever had. Scared to be leaving her friends, and the cherished memories of the short time they'd all spent together.

And scared to be leaving Mike behind. Again.

Goodbye, Mike.

El rolls over in bed and sighs inaudibly, eyes flicking to the digital clock propped up on one of the boxes. **6:27 AM.** Joyce will be up soon, if she isn't already. As the world turns, so does Joyce stubbornly cling to her old routine to a tee, even though she doesn't need to anymore.

As the world turns. Hah. El squeezes her eyes shut and fights back tears. That used to be one of her favorite daytime soaps, back in a happier time when things had been *different*, more innocent, more domestic.

One night in the cabin a lifetime ago, not long into the start of their whirlwind romance, when they'd both been absolutely sure Hopper had fallen asleep in his chair outside her door, Mike had pulled her close. Even closer than Hopper had allowed them to be up until that

point. His lips had brushed her ear as he'd murmured the words. "El, you're the *best thing* that's come into my life. *Ever*. And you're so awesome, and so cute, and so smart, and I'm so lucky that I get to spend the rest of my life with you..."

But he hadn't *said* he'd loved her, not then. Not by the start of summer when they'd grown so attached that they'd started spending every day together to Hop's absolute chagrin, not when she'd extended the olive branch to him after their rash and short-lived breakup, not when the Russians had threatened apocalyptic doom and they'd found themselves thrust back into the terrifying nightmare they'd all thought was banished for good.

And not even when he'd found out the devastating news that her father hadn't made it out of that bunker, deep beneath the innocent façade of Starcourt Mall.

A part of her knows Mike is always going to be Mike, that goofy, gangly, awkward boy she fell in *love* with that fateful week back in 1983. She still remembers the night they'd first left each other behind, sitting together in the school cafeteria, talking about pudding and mom's cooking and going to cheesy school dances with someone that you *like*... but not as a *friend*. Then came the very first kiss. Followed by 353 days apart.

He'd struggled to say the words then.

And three months ago, sitting together on the floor of Bradley's Big Buy, while tending to her wounds and enjoying a moment of tranquility during the calm before the storm, what was it he'd said to her? Oh, yes. They do say *it* makes you *crazy*. *Blank* makes you *crazy*, like the *word*.

It sort of makes sense to her that he'd struggle to say them now.

Her thoughts meander again, back to the day the Mind Flayer came for her. Mike doesn't know it, but El *had* heard him arguing with Max and the others that morning. She'd pulled the blindfold off after finally finding Billy in the Void, determined and ready to break the news to the rest of the party, but the shouting had made her pause at her bedroom door for a moment, fingers trembling on the handle,

listening in trepidation to her boyfriend bellowing outside.

So can we please just come up with a new plan because I love her and I can't lose her again!

And just like that, lying there in the darkness, El's suddenly not as scared anymore, not as empty. She's hopeful again. She *knows*.

But she'd *always* known and so had he, they'd just never admitted it *to each other*.

Friends don't lie. Boyfriends don't lie. Girlfriends don't lie.

But then again, does *saying nothing* count as a lie?

This took shape from some notes I made after I finished the season, mainly to get the dreaded monkey off my back, and also to give myself some closure and acceptance over how kooky the Mileven writing initially felt.